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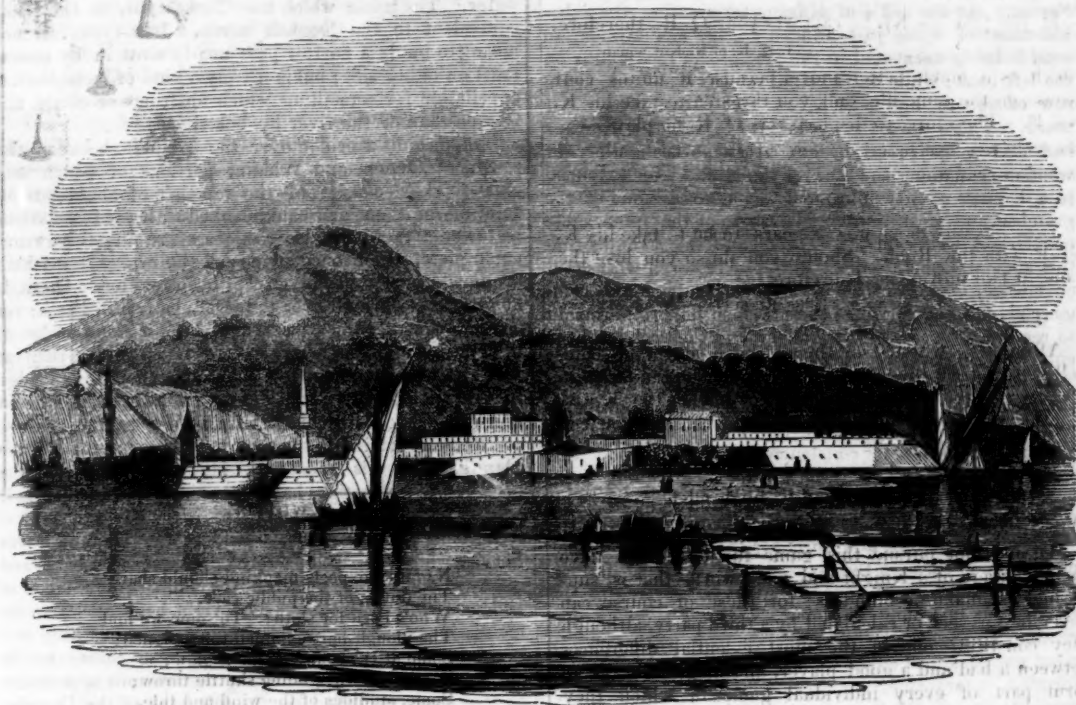
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A VOYAGE DOWN THE DANUBE. VII.



ORSOVA.

GOLUMBACZ.—THE RAPIDS.—QUARANTINE AT ORSOVA.—
THE "IRON GATE."—RUTSCHUK.—SILISTRIA.—DELTA
OF THE DANUBE.—CONCLUSION.

We had brought the reader, in the last article, to that point of the Danube where the mountains approach so near to the shore, and the bed of the river is so rocky as to render the passage very difficult and dangerous. At the western extremity of this portion of the river, at a spot near Moldava, where the stream is suddenly contracted to one-fourth of its former width, the mountains approach close to the water on both banks, and two castles, once occupied by the robber-knights of old, crown the summits of the two opposite promontories. One of these castles, called Golumbacz, surmounts a rock full of caverns and fissures, from which issue swarms of gnats or mosquitos during summer. The ignorant peasantry have a tradition that it was in one of these caverns that St. George slew the dragon, whose putrefied carcase gave rise to these swarms of insects; they say, too, that repeated attempts have been made to wall up the mouth of the cavern, to prevent the egress of the troublesome visitors; but all in vain, for they found other outlets. The probability is, however, that the marshes and swamps which environ the Danube, are the source whence they proceed. The insects issue forth at the beginning of the summer heats, and do not disappear till the end of July. The peasants, within a circuit of forty or fifty miles from this spot, are prepared for the approach of the insects, and light large fires in the fields, in order that the cattle, which are the peculiar objects of attack, may shelter themselves in the smoke. At the town of New Moldava, the cattle, sheep,

and horses are kept in-doors by day during the insect-season, and driven out only at night, being at the same time anointed with pitch, &c., on their nostrils and other parts of the skin, to protect them from the attacks of the fly.

To show the dangerous nature of the rapids which occur near Orsova, we will quote the following from a traveller who passed down this part of the Danube in a cutter (the river being too shallow for a steamer) four or five years ago.

Below us, in the narrows, we saw a-head of us several long thin lines of white breakers, stretching across from side to side as regularly as though they had been drawn with a rule. These are caused by reefs of hard porphyry or grauwaacke rock, crossing the river obliquely like a dam, and called *Izlas*. The roaring of the water, as it rushes over them, is heard at a considerable distance; but not many minutes elapsed before the draught of the current had borne us into the midst of the tumult, where, surrounded by breakers, dashing upwards in ceaseless activity, and by hollow boiling eddies, the vessel might have fared ill, had she not been well piloted. The *Izlas* were coolly and dexterously cleared; but scarcely had we emerged from them, when we approached another similar reef and rapid, called the *Greiben*. The sail was lowered, the rowers sent to the bow of the boat, and we steered close under the Servian bank. As we drew near, the captain's orders to the steersman became less steady, very frequent, and rather variable; at last he exclaimed with some agitation, "Where is the channel?" A question at which I was not surprised, since my eye could discern no opening whatever in the line of foaming breakers. The men were hastily ordered to their oars, in order by their efforts to lift us up as much as possible over the ledge. Luckily the keel did not even

touch the rocks, and in half a minute we had doubled a singular promontory of sandstone rock, projecting far into the Danube, worn and polished by the waves of centuries; and were immediately in smooth water. We found the gorge we had passed hid from view, and our cutter gliding along the surface of a lake-like basin, into which the Danube, freed from its straits, suddenly expands itself, surrounded on all sides by round-backed wooded hills, delightfully lighted up by the sun, which had been unable to penetrate into the ravine above.

For some distance beyond this point, vestiges remain of the Romans, who seventeen centuries ago possessed Servia. At the defile of Kazan, terminating the lake-like sheet of water just alluded to, the new Hungarian road is being excavated in the face of the rocky cliffs on the left bank; while on the right or Servian bank are a row of square holes, at a few feet above high-water mark. These were the spots into which the Romans had driven horizontal beams, to support a gallery or wooden road along the face of the cliff. This extended to a distance of fifty miles, and was assuredly one of the grandest and most useful public works of that remarkable people. A writer in the *Quarterly Review* thinks that this ancient Roman gallery might be restored with great advantage, whenever Servia becomes sufficiently commercial and enterprising; the chiselled holes still remain to receive the beams of the gallery, and the rock has been cut away wherever necessary.

Lower down the river, but still in the defile of Kazan, the rocky wall of the precipice on the right bank bears an inscription in honour of the Emperor Trajan, by whom the road was constructed. Just beyond this we arrive at Orsova, a military village containing about a thousand inhabitants, principally Wallachians. This town is at the point where the Danube leaves the Austrian dominions, and flows for the entire remainder of its course through the dominions of Turkey. In fact, the three countries of Hungary, Servia, and Wallachia, all meet at this point, and hence comes a singular quarantine arrangement. A traveller from each country must not pass into either of the other two without performing quarantine, a regulation which necessarily prevents any of the three parties from intermixing for the purpose of buying or selling, nor can they touch each other's goods. They do traffic, however, at Orsova, but in a very singular manner. The market-place is divided by partitions into three sections, destined respectively for natives of the three countries. In the middle of the whole is a table, by the side of which the Austrian quarantine officers take their stand, supported by a guard of soldiers with fire-arms and fixed bayonets, to enforce order and obedience. When Wallachians or Servians wish to traffic with the Hungarians at Orsova, they are brought thither, with their merchandize, by a guard of Austrian soldiers, who take care not to allow them to touch a single article on their way to the market-place. The Wallachians, the Servians, and the Hungarians, being assembled in their respective sections, proceed to bargain together *viâ voce*, hallooing to each other at a distance of several yards. When a bargain is concluded, the goods are handed up to the guards, and either fumigated or dipped in a tub of water before being consigned to the purchaser; and the purchase-money is placed in a long ladle held by one of the attendants, who transfers the money to a basin of vinegar, and after washing it, gives it to the seller of the commodities.

The chief objects near Orsova are New Orsova, the rapids called the "Iron Gate," and Trajan's Bridge. The first is a Turkish fortress, immediately opposite Orsova on the south bank of the Danube, or rather on a small island near the south bank. Its white minarets, rising amidst poplars and cypresses, give it a picturesque appearance from a distance; but it is rather a desolate spot when viewed more closely.

The "Iron Gate" is the last, but the most formidable obstacle to the navigation of the Danube. An immense

bed of rock stretches across the river, and down it for a distance of more than a mile, descending fifteen feet in that distance, so as to constitute a rapid. The bed of rock has numerous projecting points jutting upwards, which occasion eddies and whirlpools in every part of the stream; and as, at low water, many of these projecting points rise above the surface, they give the river a very singular appearance. A very intricate and difficult channel winds among these rocky points, only known to experienced boatmen, and even by them only attempted when the river is high, and in boats drawing little water. The name which the Turks apply to this spot, equivalent to the English words, "Iron-Gate," is not meant to imply a narrow pass nearly shut in by mountains on either side; but is merely a kind of metaphorical appellation for something which obstructs or closes the free passage of the river by boats.

Trajan built a bridge over the Danube between the towns of Orsova and Widdin, portions of which still exist. They consist of the remains of abutments of solid masonry on each bank, flanked with the foundations of towers: there are also vestiges of twenty-three truncated piers, which once supported the bridge, but which are now scarcely visible, except at low-water. There is at present no bridge over the Danube below Pesth; yet Trajan, seventeen centuries ago, built a stone bridge at a point where the river is very much wider than at Pesth, a bridge longer, too, than any other stone bridge in the world, being considerably above half a mile in length. He constructed it with a view to the passage of Roman armies into the provinces north of the Danube; but his successor, Hadrian, destroyed the bridge, and its vestiges have ever since remained in their present state.

A little beyond Trajan's bridge, the Danube leaves Servia, which has so long formed its southern bank, and forms the boundary between the Turkish provinces of Bulgaria and Wallachia. The right bank ceases to be mountainous, and presents green and wooded hills and luxuriant pastures; the left bank also ceases to be mountainous, but it assumes the monotonous appearance so frequently exhibited on the left bank of the Danube. On the Bulgarian shore the Turkish fortress of Widdin comes in sight, with its fortifications, its mosques, and white minarets: it is the residence of a Turkish Pasha, and also of a Greek archbishop. Thirty miles below it is a similar fortress, called Nicopolis, attached to a walled town containing thirty thousand inhabitants.

Rutzschuk, the most commercial town in Bulgaria, is situated between Nicopolis and Silistria. The town is large, and defended by a citadel kept in good order, and surrounded by double walls and ditches. The city itself is surrounded by ditches, from twelve to fifteen feet deep, and defended by strong palisades. Whether any considerable change has taken place in Rutzschuk since Mr. Quin visited it, we do not know; but his remarks concerning it are not very complimentary:—

When I first beheld it at a distance, with its numerous mosques and minarets shining in the sun, rising on a bold promontory from the edge of the vast expanse of waters formed by the Danube, I felt confident that it was a wealthy, populous, active, cleanly, and handsome city,—a city I should experience great gratification in examining. Never was my imagination more deceived. A more poverty-stricken, deserted, idle, filthy, ill-conceived town, does not, I believe, exist in Turkey. The streets on each side present only dead walls, without even a window to relieve their desolate appearance. The houses all face inwards, opening into a court-yard, which is entered by a gate.

Silistria, the next important town on the Danube, has derived some notoriety from the firmness with which a Turkish army defended the place from a Russian force four-fold more numerous, for a period of nine months; this occurred during the Russo-Turkish campaign of 1828–1829. As it is a fortress built on the northern frontier, in the neighbourhood of the Danube, it might

be expected to be a place of commercial importance; but although many merchants have lately settled there, its commercial activity is not very great. The fort is situated on the extreme west of the town, which, upon the whole, is about as ill-built as most other Turkish towns; the streets are narrow and crooked; the houses low and dull; even the five mosques and the two public baths partake of the general ugliness. There is, however, at the eastern extremity of the town a custom-house in a better style of architecture. The environs are rather pleasant; and the numerous vineyards which border the Danube give them a cheerful aspect. There are, also, ruins; which are said to have formed part of the wall raised by the Greek emperors against the incursions of the barbarians.

The Danube makes a decided bend northward soon after leaving Silistria, to which succeeds an eastern course, terminating in the Black Sea. A few towns are passed on the route, of which the only one sufficiently important to call for notice here is Galatz. This town is a quarantine station, at which all persons arriving from Constantinople must perform a quarantine of fourteen days if they land. Galatz is the port of Moldavia, where there is sufficient water for large vessels to come up close to the quay; but in other respects the town resembles all the Turkish towns on the banks of the Danube, in being dirty, dreary, and comfortless almost beyond expression.

At the town of Tuldjah, somewhat farther eastward, the "delta" of the Danube commences; that is, the river divides into several arms or mouths, which proceed thence to the sea. Of these mouths, seven in number, only three are of the slightest importance; and of the three, only one is deep enough for large ships. Russia, by the treaty of Adrianople, has become mistress of this outlet of the river, and virtually of the entrance to the Danube itself.

From Mr. Murray's admirable *Hand Book for Southern Germany*, we learn that this important outlet is gradually being filled up by the vast deposits of mud brought down by the Danube. From the very slight descent of its bed for the last two hundred miles of its course, it does not possess sufficient strength of current to carry the silt into the sea, nor to scour out its channel; there is thus some danger, in a series of years, of this mouth being sanded up, unless artificial means are resorted to to clear it.

Thus we terminate our notice of this noble river, which flows into the Black Sea after a course of nearly sixteen hundred miles, during which it has received the waters of thirty navigable rivers, and ninety smaller streams.—Having brought the steam-boat traveller thus far, we will suppose him to have extended his steam-voyage from the mouth of the Danube to Constantinople, (about forty hours' trip); for a description of which celebrated city we refer to a Supplement in the present volume of the *Saturday Magazine*, p. 121.

LONDON.

Thou hive of busy multitudes, in thee
How hard on weary souls the pressure seems
Of cares bequeathed them by the sanguine dreams
Of boyhood's ardent fancy ere they flee;
From this how few of all thy thousands free!
All feel the burden, even where luxury teems,
And mid the busier life that daily streams
Through all thy streets, a restless, shoreless sea.
To thee, huge Babylon! what thousands post
Of youths, like grass in spring-time green and lithe,
Spared from the ravage of death's envious scythe,
But doomed, ere manhood, mid thy toils and strife,
To mourn their beauty prematurely lost,
Car'ss salown victims in the morn o' life! —D. D. S.

THE BANKS OF THE THAMES.

HADLEIGH CASTLE—THE MEDWAY—THE NORE
—SHEERNESS—SOUTHEND—CONCLUSION

If we inspect a map of the river Thames, we shall find that the width of the stream increases very rapidly below Gravesend. Gravesend Reach extends for some miles eastward of that town, gradually widening as it proceeds; then the bend of the river called the Hope, stretches nearly in a northern direction; and to that succeeds what may properly be called the mouth of the river, the shores on either side receding till the stream attains a magnificent width. Let us first notice a few attractive points on the Kentish shore, and then direct attention to the opposite county of Essex.

The Medway joins the Thames in such a manner as to leave a large peninsula jutting out towards the Nore; this peninsula is called the Hoo, and was in the time of Hollinshead associated with a proverb not very creditable to the inhabitants:—

He that rideth in the Hundred of Hoo,
Besides pilfering seamen shall find dirt enow.

Among the towns and villages in this Hoo, is that of Higham, where the Roman general, Plautius, is supposed to have crossed the river from Essex with all his army, in pursuit of the flying Britons. A ferry existed for many ages between Higham and Tilbury, of which accounts are met with in the time of Henry the Eighth, before which Higham was a place much used for the shipping and unshipping of corn and goods. At a little distance beyond this is a place called Cliffe, the church of which is visible from Gravesend, and is a building of more than common importance. Even so long ago as the time of William the Conqueror, all the bishops in the province of Canterbury were wont to hold an annual meeting in Cliffe Church on the 1st of August, to settle rules for the governance of the clergy. The church was once richly adorned with monumental brasses; but the soldiers of Cromwell's army despoiled it.

On the opposite shore very little exists calling for notice here, till we come to a creek which is proposed to form the dock of the Thames Haven Railway Company. Those who have paid attention to the course of railway speculation within the last few years, may have noticed that one of these projects is for a railway from London, or from Romford on the Eastern Counties Railway, to a point on the banks of the Thames about midway between Gravesend and the Nore. The plan embraces the construction of capacious docks at the river-side for the reception of laden vessels, and the construction of a railway, whereby the merchandise so brought, may be further conveyed to London. The advantages expected to be derived from the plan relate to the avoidance of a considerable extent of river traffic, by transferring goods to a railway almost immediately on entering the Thames. Whether the plan is found to be attended with unforeseen difficulties, or whether it is influenced by the fluctuations which attend railway projects, we do not know; but the proceedings seem to be at present rather in abeyance.

Eastward of the creek destined to form the haven of the railway just alluded to is a low, swampy district, a few miles in length, called the Isle of Canvey; being surrounded on the land side by a small creek from the river. Within or beyond this, on the mainland of Essex, stands Hadleigh Castle, a building whose history extends to a very distant period. It was erected by Hubert de Burgh, Earl of Kent, in the reign of Henry the Third; but its domain appears to have been comprehended in the honour of Raleigh, and to have belonged to Suene, being one of the fifty-five lordships in his possession at the time of Domesday survey. Henry de Essex, Suene's grandson, having been dispossessed of his estates by Henry the Third, in consequence of his dastardly conduct in the Welsh wars, Hadleigh was granted by that monarch to Hubert de Burgh, Earl of Kent, who built

the castle; but that nobleman afterwards falling into disgrace, the king again seized it, and committed the custody of the castle to Richard de Thang. From this period the lands were held from the Crown by different families; and among others they came into possession of Thomas de Woodstock, who is said to have been smothered at Calais in 1397, by the connivance of Richard the Second. At length this castle and its domain was finally granted by Edward the Sixth, to Richard, lord Riche, from whom it passed to the family of the Bernards. In later times, part of the castle was demolished, and the remainder suffered to fall to decay.

Hadleigh Castle, though now in a very dilapidated state, and overrun with bushes and brushwood, bears in its decay the marks of ancient magnificence and grandeur. The area inclosed by the walls is nearly of an oval form; the walls on the north and south sides are strengthened by buttresses; and the cement, which seems to have been mixed up with sea-shells, is become nearly as hard as the stones themselves. The entrance at the north-west angle is between the remains of two towers, and a deep ditch appears to have extended along the north side. The principal remains of this once stately building are two towers; at the south-east and north-east angles; their exterior form is circular, but each of them contains five octagonal apartments; they are of uncommon strength and power of resistance, the walls being nine feet thick at the bottom and five at the top.

A little beyond Hadleigh Castle is situated the small fishing-town of Leigh, once, as is said, celebrated for its grapes, but now presenting no claim to that favourable character. Two miles eastward of Leigh we arrive at a point which marks the eastern extremity of the jurisdiction of the City of London. The lord-mayor is conservator of the Thames, from the place here mentioned to Staines, and occasionally visits the two extremities of his jurisdiction. The "Crow-stone," near Leigh, is inscribed with the names of various lord-mayors who have visited it.

We now come to that wide and important spot where Southend occurs in the Essex coast, Sheerness on the Kentish coast, the Nore be-ween them, and the river Medway pours its waters into the Thames just where both begin to lose themselves in the German Ocean. The readers of Spenser will remember his fanciful *Bridal of the Thames and Medway*, where the Thames, as bridegroom, attended by all his tributary streams, and the Medway, as the bride, by hers, are introduced:—thus, the bridegroom,

That full fresh and jolly was,
All decked in a robe of watchet hue,
On which the waves, glittering like crystal glass,
So cunningly enwoven were, that few
Could ween whether they were false or trew
And on his head, like to a coronet,
He wore, that seemed strange to common view,
In which were many towers and castles set,
That it encompass round as with a golden fret.

Then of the bride:—

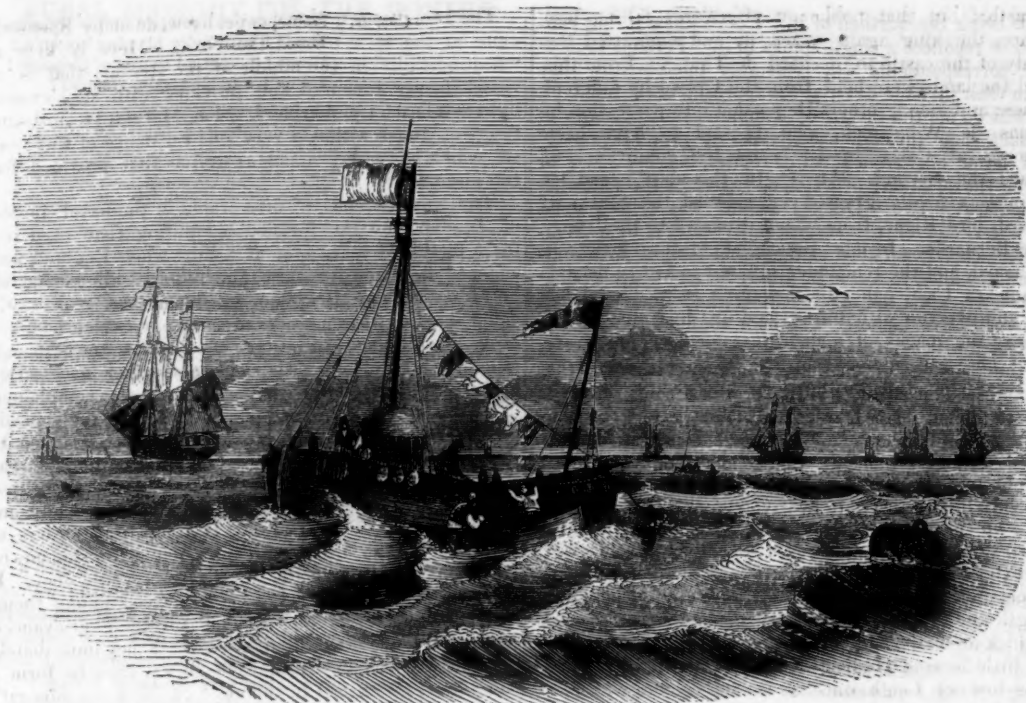
The lovely Medua came,
Clad in a vesture of unknown gear
And uncouth fashion, yet her well became,
That seemed like silver sprinkled here and there,
With glittering spangs, that did like stars appeare,
And waved upon like water chamelot,
To hide the metal; which yet everywhere
Bewrayed itself, and let men plainly wot
It was no mortal work that seemed, and yet was not.

Her goodly locks adown her back did flow
Unto her waist, with flowers besattered;
The which ambrosial odours forth did throw
To all about, and all her shoulders spread
As a new Spring; and likewise on her head
A chaplet rare of sundry flowers she wore,
From under which the dewy humour shed,
Did trickle down her hair, like to the hoar
Congealed little drops that do the morn adore.

The two streams, thus poetically wedded by Spenser, unite at the spot termed the Nore. Here is kept a "floating-light" in the middle of the stream; that is, a vessel firmly anchored and provided with an elevated light as a beacon to mariners. The Margate steam-boats frequently pass within a very small distance of this vessel, which has a day-signal as well as that provided for the night-time.

The Nore is rendered memorable in the naval annals of England by the formidable mutiny that occurred there forty-five years ago, at a time when England was engaged in extensive wars, and required all the aid of her forces. The British navy, about the year 1797, complained of the smallness of their pay, which had not been raised since the time of Charles the Second, although all kinds of provisions and other necessities had greatly increased in price. The men also complained of the placing of youths and striplings over their heads as officers; but the main cause of complaint related to the scantiness of their pay, and this complaint was repeatedly and respectfully urged on the naval authorities. In the month of April, 1797, Lord Bridport, who commanded a fleet in Portsmouth Harbour, gave orders to weigh anchor; but, to his inexpressible astonishment, he found that not one of the ships' crews would obey. It appeared that the men had secretly agreed among themselves not to leave the harbour till their grievances, real or pretended, were redressed; and they immediately elected two delegates from each ship's crew to form a committee, which met in the chief cabin of the admiral's ship, and penned two petitions, one to the Admiralty, and one to the House of Commons, praying very respectfully for the ameliorations which they required. Meantime they treated the admiral with great kindness, sent on shore some of the officers who were obnoxious to them, took an oath among themselves to support the cause in which they were engaged, and threatened to hang every one who should prove a traitor. As there had before been a strong impression in parliament that the demands of the men were reasonable, the Ministry conceded the point, and all went off satisfactorily. But the fleet which happened to be stationed at the Nore then took up the matter, and made claims so outrageous, that the Government could not listen to them for an instant. Four large ships deserted from the fleet of Lord Duncan, which was stationed off Holland, and joined the mutineers at the Nore. This accession increased the number of ships to more than twenty; and the mutineers, who had placed one Richard Parker at their head, made the most insolent demands, and required that the Lords of the Admiralty should repair to the Nore in person, to discuss the grievances complained of. This the Government promptly agreed to, but the conference led to nothing, as the mutineers completely overstepped all reasonable bounds. Thereupon, the King, the Parliament, and the executive departments, adopted such a bold and firm tone, as ultimately brought the mutineers to their senses. Richard Parker and some of the most active mutineers were executed, but the remainder were forgiven. It was on the last day of June, that Parker's execution put a period to the mutiny; a mutiny which, had it not been quelled in time, might have produced incalculable mischief to the country.

Sheerness, an important depot at the entrance of the Medway, was in the reign of Charles the Second a small town, containing merely a small fort with twelve guns; but after the Dutch, in the year 1667, had forced an English fleet up the Medway, and burned some vessels at Chatnam, the place was immediately increased to a regular fortification. Owing to the naval establishment formed here, Sheerness has grown up into a considerable town, consisting of two divisions,—Blue Town, and Mile Town. It has been of late years much enlarged, some new streets and a spacious hotel having been erected. A pier and causeway extend from the



THE NORE LIGHT.

town to low-water mark. There was formerly a great scarcity of water at Sheerness; but an abundant supply is now obtained from four subscription wells, which have been sunk to the enormous depth of three hundred and sixty feet; from three of these wells the inhabitants are supplied at so much per pailful, while the fourth, situated within the dockyard, supplies the ships at the Nore. The dockyard has been greatly extended and improved within the last fifteen years, at a cost of about three millions sterling, and is now one of the finest in Europe, it covers an area of sixty acres, and is surrounded by a brick wall. The docks are sufficiently capacious to receive men-of-war of the first class, with all their guns, stores, and equipments on board; and two steam-engines, each of fifty-horse power, have been erected for the purpose of pumping them dry. There is a basin which will hold six ships of the first class; and two of a smaller size for store-ships and boats. The store-house is said to be the largest building in England; it is six stories in height, with iron joists, beams, window-frames, and doors, and will contain at least thirty thousand tons of naval stores. Among the other buildings are a victualling store-house, a smithy, a mast-house, houses for the port-admiral and the commissioners and principal officers of the establishment, &c.

We have now arrived at a point which must be considered the termination of the River Thames. It is true that no precise point exists to shew where river ends and sea commences; but it is fair to consider Southend on the Essex coast, with the promontory of Shoebury Ness, and Herne Bay, &c., on the Kentish coast, as pertaining to the open sea. We take our leave of the subject, therefore, by quoting from a passage the entertaining work of Mr. Mackay, on the "Thames and its Tributaries:"—

The Thames now mingles itself in the ocean. Its waters have long since lost their freshness; and the Nore light, stationed in the midst, gives notice to all that the course of the great stream is over. From the Essex to the Kentish shores the breadth of the *embouchure* is about six miles. From its source to the Nore the river has flowed for a space

of two hundred and thirty miles, and been navigable for one hundred and eighty-eight. A mere brook in comparison with some of the mighty floods of the Old and New World; a rivulet compared with the Volga, the Danube, the Don, and some other streams of Europe; but richer and more glorious than them all. Over its placid bosom passes more wealth; upon its banks resounds the hammer of more industry; and in its ports are stationed more wonders of art and civilization, and more engines of power and conquest, than in all the streams of Europe put together. And though its history abounds in no wild legends or startling traditions to please the lover of romance, yet its association with the names of the great, the good, and the learned, who have dwelt upon its banks, and loved it, recommends it to the friend of his country.

HISTORICAL NOTICE OF THE OLD School-Song, DULCE DOMUM.

MANY of our readers will readily call to mind a tune, frequently given by way of exercise in the early instructions for the flute or the violin, called "*Dulce Domum*." This tune has been long ranked among the popular English melodies, and the circumstance of a *Latin* song having become popular, and having been customarily sung at one of our principal schools, has led to many inquiries as to who was the author of the words, and what were the circumstances under which they were written. About half a century ago, the *Gentleman's Magazine*—that unique repository of curious antiquarian gossip—became the medium of communication between many persons who had opinions to offer on these points; communications which, as in the case of the authorship of many other old songs, have not altogether settled the question at issue.

In the first part of the volume of the *Magazine* for 1796, a communication from a correspondent is inserted, one part of which runs as follows: "My youngsters are very desirous to know the words of an old *breaking-up* song, which is usually called '*Dulce Domum*,' those

words being the burthen of it. I once knew it, but cannot now recollect a single stanza of it. Perhaps some of your correspondents will remember the pleasure they felt in their juvenile days, at the approach of the holidays, and will do me the favour to communicate the words of the said song through the channel of your Magazine." This letter elicited a shoal of replies, bearing more or less on the question: of which one narrated the following particulars:—The "Dulce Domum" was written about the latter end of the seventeenth century, by a Winchester scholar, detained at the usual time of breaking-up, and chained to a tree or pillar, for an offence against the master, when the other scholars had liberty to visit their respective homes. The poor confined scholar was so affected with grief, at being thus deprived of his liberty, and the privilege of visiting "home, sweet home," that he expressed his feelings in the form of a song, or rather ode, to home. He is reported to have died broken-hearted before his companions returned; and in memory of this unhappy incident, the scholars of Winchester school, attended by the master, chaplains, organist, and choristers, used formerly to have an annual procession, and walk three times round the pillar to which the luckless boy had been chained.

The words of a song, written—or reputed to be written—under such singular circumstances, became a matter of some interest; and we will therefore give them:—

Concinamus, O sodales!
Eja! quid silemus!
Nobile canticum!
Dulce melos, domum!
Dulce domum, resonemus!
Chorus. Domum, domum, dulce domum!
Domum, domum, dulce domum!
Dulce, dulce, dulce domum!
Dulce domum, resonemus!
Appropinquet ecce! felix
Horn gaudiorum,
Post grave tedium
Advenit omnium
Meta petita laborum.
Domum, domum, &c.
Musa! libros mitte, fessa,
Mitte pensa dura,
Mitte negotium,
Jam datur otium,
Me mea mittito cura!
Domum, domum, &c.
Ridet annus, prata rident,
Nosque rideamus,
Jam repetit domum
Daulius advena:
Nosque domum repetamus,
Domum, domum, &c.
Heus! Rogere, fer caballos;
Eja, nunc eamus,
Limen amabile;
Matris et oscula,
Suaviter et repetamus.
Domum, domum, &c.
Concinamus ad Penates,
Vox et audiat;
Phosphore! quid jubar,
Segnius emicans
Gaudia nostra moratur?
Domum, domum, &c.

We have never yet seen a good English translation of this song, nor is it probable that one could be given, which would preserve the peculiar quantities of the original; but one was offered by a correspondent of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, from which we will quote two or three stanzas, to show that the song is rather a joyous one, and not the offspring of melancholy thoughts.

Sing a sweet melodious measure,
Waft enchanting lays around;
Home! a theme replete with pleasure,
Home! a grateful theme, resound!

Chorus. Home, sweet home, an ample treasure!
Home! with ev'ry blessing crown'd!
Home! perpetual source of pleasure!
Home! a noble strain, resound!

Lo! the joyful hour advances
Happy season of delight!
Festal songs and festal dances
All our tedious toils requite.

Chorus. Home, sweet home, &c.

See, the year, the meadows smiling!
Let us then a smile display;
Rural sports our toils beguiling,
Rural pastimes call away.

Chorus. Home, sweet home, &c.
&c. &c. &c.

We have seen a translation, or rather an imitation of the song, as written to be sung in chorus at a public concert by the scholars of a country school, in the week preceding the Whitsun holidays; commencing,

Let us all, my blithe companions,
Join in mirthful, mirthful glee!
Pleasant our subject!
Sweet, oh! sweet our object!
Home, sweet home, we soon shall see.

But without dwelling longer on the attempts which have been made at rendering the song into English; we may ask—as others have asked—is it likely that so buoyant and joyous a song would be written by a poor disconsolate school-boy, suffering a degrading confinement while his mates were all starting off to their homes? A writer who had made many inquiries into the matter, after alluding to the traditional account of the writer of the song, offers his opinion thus:—"But the authenticity of this tradition may, perhaps, be doubted; for that a boy should write a song expressive of his joy at going home, when he was confined for the holidays, appears highly improbable: Verses written at such a time, would rather contain lamentations on his confinement. Let the reader consider whether the expressions, 'Eja! quid silemus?' 'Nosque rideamus,' 'Eja! nunc eamus,' 'Phosphore, quid jubar,' 'Gaudia nostra moratur,' could proceed from a youth who was precluded from partaking of the general joy by his imprisonment. To remove this disagreement between this tradition and the character of the song, the following conjecture is offered; that the author, having for some offence been confined to the college during one vacation, was so overjoyed on the approach of the next vacation at the prospect of going home, after a whole year's absence from his friends, that he wrote this song to express his unusual delight on the occasion." But if we receive this version of the story, what becomes of the pathos thrown into the original tradition by the broken-heart and the untimely death of the poor boy? The authorities at Winchester School would not, as they are recorded to have done, have annually formed a mournful procession round the place of confinement, unless something more had occurred than is intimated in the opinion just expressed; yet it is not easy to decide between this opinion and the tradition itself. The Rev. Mr. Brand sustains the account of the procession round the courts of Winchester College; but remarks that the song itself is doubtless of high antiquity, and its origin must be traced not to any ridiculous tradition, but to the tenderest feelings of human nature. Dr. Milner alleges that the existence of the original can only be traced up to the distance of about a century; yet its real author and the occasion of its composition are already clouded with fables.

The tune of "Dulce Domum" is said to have been composed by John Reading, in the reign of King Charles the Second.

In beauty faults conspicuous grow,
The smallest speck is seen on snow.—GAY.

RURAL ECONOMY FOR THE MONTHS.

XII.

DECEMBER.

Nor field nor garden now invites,
The rambling step to new delights.
Nature to man, and bird, and beast,
Proclaims a dull unwonted rest.
Aside the inactive plough is laid.
The adhesive mould the clotted spade
Defies. Beneath the sheltering hedge,
Beneath the stacks o'erhanging ledge,
The herds and flocks, each cautious form
Turn'd backward to the driving storm,
Crowd fearfully. Their guardians nigh
In folded cloak, close mantled lie:
And nigh the dogs, still wont to share
The master's comforts as his care,
Beneath the well-known refuge creep,
Lull'd by the storm to transient sleep.

MAYN'T'S *British Months*.

WE have arrived at the closing month of the year, and at the least active period for the agriculturist. Rural occupations are now entirely dependent on "wind and weather," so that out-door employments neglected in preceding months are little likely to be performed to advantage in this. In favourable weather, however, some of the last month's employments are still carried on: ditches are cleansed, fences repaired, plantations completed, turf collected, manure-heaps prepared, &c.; but the general, steady employment of the month, which can be carried on when all out-door proceedings are suspended, is that of thrashing.

Thrashing by hand is still adopted to a great extent. The flail has certainly its advantages in giving employment to labourers in the barn during wet weather, and in supplying fresh straw for fodder every day. This ancient implement was originally nothing more than a whip, and sometimes had two or more lashes. In this form it was in use among the Romans, though, in mild climates, the more prevalent custom of the ancients appears to have been the treading out of corn by cattle in the open air. The modern flail consists of a handle or handstaff, united with the swiple, or part which strikes the corn, by means of couplings, or thongs of untanned leather. These thongs are passed through holes in the ends of the handle and swiple, and made fast by being sewed together. Thus the swiple moves freely on all sides, and is raised and directed by the labourer while he uses the handstaff as a lever. There can be no doubt but that the flail is quite effectual to the purpose of clearing the grain without damage either to the corn or to the straw. But it demands a large amount of time and labour to accomplish it, and it is also difficult, without unremitting attention on the part of the employer, to get the work well and thoroughly done. At the same time the temptation to pilfer is continually presented to the labourer, and even if he be honest, the unpleasant feeling of suspicion will sometimes cross the mind of his master.

These evils have led to the invention of various machines for thrashing corn, and one or the other of them is in use on almost every extensive farm in the country. The thrashing machine gives the farmer the power of preparing corn for delivery on any given day, without waiting for the tedious operation of the flail, and thus gives him an advantage in the market unknown to agriculturists of by-gone days. In the trials of implements at the Agricultural Society's meeting at Cambridge last year, the quantity of wheat thrashed in one hour by two four-horse portable machines manufactured by Ransome, of Ipswich, and Garrett and Son, Leiston, was respectively sixty-one bushels and three-quarters of a peck; and sixty-one bushels and a quarter of a peck; and the corn was clean thrashed and uninjured. Besides this valuable abridgment of human labour, there is another equally in use at this time of the year. A chaff-cutter is now considered indispensable on a

large farm establishment. By means of this instrument hay and straw are cut up into chaff, and employed as provender for live stock. Potatoes are sometimes steamed, and advantageously mixed with the chaff.

The flooding of water-meadows is also carried on during this month. The importance of this operation is fully acknowledged among agriculturists, though there is a diversity of opinion as to the way in which irrigation acts so beneficially in fertilising the soil. Sir Humphrey Davy was of opinion that a winter flooding protected the grass from the injurious effects of frost. He says, "Water is of greater specific gravity at 42° than at 32°—the freezing-point; and hence in a meadow irrigated in winter, the water immediately in contact with the grass is rarely below 40°, a degree of temperature not at all prejudicial to the living organs of plants." In 1804, in the month of March, he examined the temperature in a water-meadow near Hungerford, in Berkshire, by a very delicate thermometer, and ascertained that the temperature of the soil was ten degrees higher than the surface of the water. He remarked also that those waters which breed the best fish, are ever, the best fitted for watering meadows. Yet he does not appear to have investigated the chemical composition of river-water with especial reference to its value in irrigation; it is therefore from other sources that we learn how valuable some of its impurities are to vegetation.

Although the winter covering of the grass with water doubtless preserves it from the ill effects of sudden transitions in the state of the atmosphere, yet the great benefit seems to be derived from the deposits made by the muddy waters on the grass. Thus the water of rivers *below* the site of some city or considerable town is found much more valuable for the purposes of irrigation than the water of the same rivers *above* the town. In the former case the nourishment conveyed to the soil consists of animal and vegetable matters mechanically suspended, or chemically dissolved, in the water, and the more impure the water, the more fertilising are its effects. It has been objected that some thick muddy waters, as those of the Humber, are prejudicial instead of fertilising to the soil, and so they certainly are; but in such cases the mud left on the grass consists, not of animal or vegetable matters, but of fine earthy particles, corresponding in nature with the soil on which they are deposited, and therefore not producing good effects.

Yet these muddy waters, on a soil which was deficient in any of the earthy ingredients contained in them, would have a very beneficial effect. The irrigated meadows which are watered by the washings of the city of Edinburgh afford a proof of the superiority of muddy water for the purposes of irrigation. The extensive meadows below that town, once mere sand hillocks, have now been made, by the art of man, and by the judicious application of common sewer-water, to produce riches "far superior to anything of the kind in the kingdom, or in any other country." We are told that some of the oldest of these meadows have been irrigated for nearly a century. These are by far the most valuable, on account of the long and continual accumulation of the rich sediment left by the water; indeed, the water is so very rich, that the tenants of the meadows lying nearest the town have found it advisable to carry the common sewer-water through deep ponds, into which the water deposits a portion of the superfluous manure, before it runs over the ground. Although the formation of these meadows is irregular, and the management very imperfect, the effects of the water are astonishing; they produce crops of grass not to be equalled, being cut from four to six times a year, and the grass given green to milch cows. The grass is let every year in small patches of a quarter of an acre and upwards, and generally brings from 24*l.* to 30*l.* per acre. In 1826, part of a meadow belonging to the Earl of Moray fetched 57*l.* per acre, per annum. These facts powerfully display the advantages which

might be expected to accrue from a more extensive adoption of the system of irrigation; indeed, it is little to be doubted but that, in these days of advanced knowledge and skill in agriculture, some general and systematic endeavours will ere long be commenced for subjecting to this fertilising influence barren and waste lands, which from certain local causes have been hitherto deemed beyond the reach of such means of improvement.

As to the management of water-meadows, the following account, which relates to those of Wilts hire and Hampshire, is an abridgment of the remarks of Davis and others on this subject. In the autumn, the after-grass is eaten off quite bare, and the manager of the meadow (provincially, the *drowner*,) begins to clean out the main drain, and the main carriage, and to "right up the works," that is, to make good all the carriages and drains which the cattle have trodden in, so as to have one tier or pitch of work ready for drowning. This is immediately put under water, whilst the *drowner* is preparing the next pitch.

In the flowing meadows this work ought to be done, if possible, early enough in the autumn to have the whole meadow ready to catch the first floods after Michaelmas; the water, being the first washing of the arable lands on the sides of the chalk hills, as well as the dirt from roads, is then thick and good; and this remark as to the superior richness of the flood-waters, is one that is commonly made in Berkshire and other parts of England. The length of the autumnal watering cannot be precisely stated, as much depends upon situations and circumstances; but if water can be commanded in abundance, the custom is to give meadows a "thorough good soaking at first," perhaps for a fortnight or three weeks, with an intermission of two or three days during the period, and continue for the space of two fortnights, allowing an interval of a week between them. The works are then made as dry as possible to encourage the growth of the grass. This first soaking is to make the land sink and pitch close together, a circumstance of great consequence not only to the quantity but to the quality of the grass. As soon as the growth of the grass flags, the water must be repeated for a few days at a time, always keeping this fundamental rule in view, "to make the meadow as dry as possible after every watering, and to take off the water the moment any scum appears upon the land." Some meadows that require the water for three weeks in October and the two following months, will not, perhaps, bear it one week in February or March, and sometimes scarcely two days in April or May.

Towards the close of the month, we have generally some intimations either in the chilling snow storms, or the howlings of the wintry winds, that the season of desolation has thoroughly set in.

The sheep, before the pinching heaven,
To sheltered dale or down are driven,
Where yet some faded herbage pines,
And yet a watery sunbeam shines:
In meek despondency they eye
The withered sward and wintry sky.
The shepherd shifts his mantle's fold,
And wraps him closer from the cold;
His dogs no merry circles wheel,
But, shivering, follow at his heel;
A cowering glance they often cast,
As deeper moans the gathering blast.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

In closing our brief sketch of the Rural Economy for the Months, we would not be unmindful of the advice of a practical agriculturist, who has kindly indicated to us the points most deserving to be selected from the numerous subjects to which every month invites attention, and has also revised most of these articles before they were presented to the reader. In his directions for December, he winds up the list of subjects which are to employ the time and thoughts of the cultivator, by saying, "*Remem-*

ber the poor." And we would willingly urge this advice on all our readers. If, by the blessing of God, they are themselves removed from a state of poverty and want, let them think of the unhappy condition of multitudes of their fellow-creatures, and by well-judged, and well-timed efforts, do all in their power to lessen the amount of human misery. Especially let them seek out the most *deserving* objects of charity, those who are the least obtrusive in their behaviour, those who would rather earn than beg. By supplying occupation to such and by paying them liberally for their toil, a far more important end is effected, than by indiscriminately bestowing alms on the importunate, and perhaps the undeserving mendicant.

There is no other period of the year in which persons, generally, feel so much the influence of the surrounding gloom, as in December and the preceding month. Days as dark and stormy may occur at the commencement of January; frost and snow may, and indeed do exert a more lengthened sway as the season advances; but then the days are lengthening also, and the mind is constantly cheered with anticipations of the spring. In February, some of the early flowers pierce the snowy covering, and in March the tokens of the year's advance become yet more apparent. But in November and December the face of nature is certainly far from cheering, and we need the recollections of past mercies, and the confidence inspired by such recollections, to keep us from partaking the general gloom. The following remarks of a pleasing writer are appropriate to the present season.

There is no language which can speak more intelligibly to the thoughtful mind, than the language of nature, and it is repeated to us every year, to teach us trust and confidence in God. It tells us, that the power, which first created existence, is weakened by no time, and subject to no decay; it tells us, that, in the majesty of his reign "a thousand years are but as one day," while, in the beneficence of it "one day is as a thousand years;" it tells us still farther that in the magnificent system of his government, there exists no evil; that the appearances, which, to our limited and temporary view seem pregnant with destruction, are, in the boundless extent of His Providence the sources of returning good; and that in the very hours when we might conceive nature to be deserted and forlorn, the spirit of the Almighty is operating with unceasing force and preparing in silence the renovation of the world.

OH, it is sweet, amid this vale of tears,

To traverse earth's dull scenes with those we love,
Whom mutual joy with pious hope endears,
In this brief pilgrimage to homes above.

To them confide our cares, our griefs, and fears,

And when from hence the shafts of death remove
Them far away, 'tis doubly sweet to know
A crown above succeeds the cross below.

There is a mystic power in the ties

Which friendship throws around the human heart;
Though sorrow oft may bid the tear arise,

The sanguine mind from cold despair will start,

And as the hunted hart to covert flies,

Rush to the arms of those who will impart

Soft consolation to the pitying breast

Of those it loves, and there will calmly rest.

And, oh! far sweeter in the realms of light,

In Him we worship to possess a guide—

A Friend, who guards us in the gloom of night!

And when all others fail, doth still abide;

Who, when Creation's wonders fade from sight,

Will still defend; Who, scorned and oft denied,

Directs and shields His thankless flock with care,

And hears from heaven the contrite sinner's prayer.

The Pilgrim.

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